It may also be pointed out that there has been a significant increase in offtake in respect of BPL as may be seen below:

(figures in lakh tonnes)

	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02 (upto 28.2.2002)
BPL	59.71	69.94	95.96	99.28

Tenders for storage of foodgrains

†1950. SHRI DEVI PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether tenders were invited for storage of foodgrains;

(b) if so, whether tenders have also been received from foreign companies;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether Government are reviewing credibility and functional efficiency of these companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) RITES, on behalf of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) has issued global tenders in December 2001 inviting Requests for Qualification (RFQ) for development and operation of bulk grain handling, storage and transportation facilitites on Build-Own-Operate (BOO) basis.

(b) and (c) The details of bidders are not known because the last date or submission of RFQ is 28th March, 2002.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) The credibility and functional efficiency would be evaluated by RITES on receipt of RFQ.

PDS ration to income tax payees

1951. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government warehouses are overflowing with cereal stocks;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering to allow income-tax payees to draw ration from Public Distribution System shops;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and other alternative steps taken to dispose of the surplus stock?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) The stock of foodgrains in the Central pool as on 1st January, 2002 was 580.32 lakh tonnes (rice-256.17 lakh tonnes and wheat-324.15 lakh tonnes) as against the minimum Buffer Stocking norm of 168.00 lakh tonnes of foodgrains including 84 lakh tonnes of rice and 84 lakh tonnes of wheat.

(b) to (d) Income-tax payers have not been debarred to draw ration from fair price shops under Public Distribution System (PDS). however, in order to target the PDS towards the poor, the levy sugar suply under the PDS has been restricted only to the familes living below poverty line (BPL) in all States/UTs except the North-Eastern States. Hill States and Island Territories *w.e.f.* 1.2.2001.

In view of the abundant stocks of wheat and rice in the central pool, the steps taken by the Government of India to enhance food